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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CANBERRA 000403

SIPDIS

STATE FOR T, EAP/K, EAP/ANP AND NP/RA

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TAGS: [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [AS](#) [KN](#) [IAEA](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIA WANTS MORE PRESSURE ON NORTH KOREA

REF: A. STATE 32567

[1](#)B. CANBERRA 354

Classified By: CDA BILL STANTON FOR REASONS 1.4 (A, B AND D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST: In a February 25 courtesy call on DFAT Secretary L'Estrange, North Korean Ambassador Chon engaged on the question of whether North Korea would return to the Six-Party Talks (6PT). According to DFAT, Chon launched into the DPRK's "standard diatribe" about the U.S. "hostile intent." Chon told L'Estrange that his government's lack of willingness to return to the 6PT was a result of its perception that the U.S. desired regime change, making it pointless to continue negotiations. Our DFAT contact said the GOA and FM Downer in particular were wrestling with the question of what more the GOA could do bilaterally and what more the international community could do collectively to bring North Korea around to surrendering its nuclear program.

The GOA is interested in continuing U.S.-Australian discussions begun in Canberra in July 2003 on proposals to interdict all forms of North Korean criminal activity. Embassy would appreciate further guidance and encourage another visit to Australia by an Illicit Activities Initiative delegation. See para 5. End Summary and Action Request.

NORTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR: STANDARD LINE

[1](#)2. (C) Polmiloff presented Ref A points on February 25 to DFAT Korea Section Chief Bill Brummitt, outlining the U.S. view on North Korea's February 10 statement announcing that it was suspending its participation in the Six-Party Talks and that it possessed nuclear weapons. Brummitt thanked us for the U.S. points which he said matched the GOA's outlook. He related that North Korean Ambassador Chon Jae Hong had paid a courtesy call that morning on Michael L'Estrange, the new DFAT Secretary (Deputy Secretary Equivalent), at the Ambassador's request. The call had turned into a substantive discussion as L'Estrange told Chon that Australia wanted the DPRK to return to the 6PT without conditions; the GOA viewed the February 10 statement as part of an unproductive DPRK pattern. Chon's response, Brummitt reported, was nearly a verbatim recitation of the February 10 statement, asserting that North Korea's need for nuclear weapons was driven by the USG's "hostile policy" toward the DPRK. Chon linked President Bush's statements in his inaugural address calling for the spread of democracy with Secretary Rice's confirmation hearing statements about "13 outposts of tyranny" and concluded that the USG's goal for North Korea was regime change. If that was the U.S. policy, Chon told L'Estrange, there was no point in holding further Six-Party Talks.

CHON: BOTH SIDES MUST MOVE

[1](#)3. (C) According to Brummitt, Secretary L'Estrange had replied to Chon that it was good to keep communicating, even if the GOA and DPRK disagreed. When Chon asserted that Pyongyang appreciated the fact that the GOA's view was a bit different from that of the U.S., L'Estrange had curtly retorted that it was not: the GOA view was exactly the same as that of the U.S. and, in fact, the entire international community wanted North Korea to return to the 6PT without conditions. Trying to illustrate that the DPRK wanted to "be friends" with the entire world, Chon suggested that L'Estrange go back and look at the footage of how Secretary Albright had been received in Pyongyang in 1999. Chon argued that the lack of trust between the U.S. and DPRK had been overcome in 1994 through simultaneous movement by both sides. "This is the only way out," Chon asserted, adding that at the third round of the 6PT in June 2004, the four countries other than the U.S. had agreed to offer "inducements" for North Korea to take its first steps. According to Chon, while the U.S. had not wanted to provide any up-front benefits, it had not opposed the others' efforts at the time. Chon accused the U.S. of "backpedalling" once the delegation returned to Washington.

WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE TO PRESSURE THE DPRK?

14. (C) Asked by Polmiloff about the GOA's ideas for getting the North Koreans back to the 6PT, Brummitt said that FM Downer was personally engaged on this issue. The two questions were: what more could the GOA do bilaterally, and what more could the international community do collectively? Brummitt thought there was little else that the GOA could do bilaterally, beyond further travel restrictions on North Koreans. Polmiloff recalled that FM Downer had recently suggested to a visiting U.S. delegation that aid which served to prop up North Korea's infrastructure should be withheld (Ref B). Polmiloff also suggested that the GOA look at applying appropriate pressure on third countries that bought North Korean missile technology or other illicit exports, if such exports came to Canberra's attention. Brummitt acknowledged that Australia could perhaps keep a more vigilant look-out for North Korean activity in the South Pacific. He expressed interest in holding further discussions with Washington on more and better ways to interdict North Korean criminal activity. Brummitt also related that in early February DFAT had been considering sending another delegation to Pyongyang to urge resumption of the 6PT, but the February 10 announcement had killed that idea. He said the GOA would consult with the U.S. if the delegation proposal were revived at a future date.

ACTION REQUEST

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15. (C) We should take advantage of the GOA interest in doing more to choke off North Korea's illegal sources of income. We believe another visit to Australia by an Illegal Activities Initiative delegation would be a good way to resume bilateral consultations on how to increase pressure on Pyongyang's criminal activities.

STANTON